

ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT: The Land We Lay Our Heads

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The Land We Lay Our Heads is a collection of eight fabulist fiction pieces set in Marion, Indiana. Centered around community and place, each of these pieces explore the themes of family, connection, and what it means to reside next door to and in unity—or disunity—with fellow human beings. Heavily inspired by authors like Kelly Link that play with magical realism, this collection pits the rural landscape up against the bizarre, using that contrast, and heightened distance from reality, to grind up against theme. Each piece requires close investigation of an actual building, place, or area in Grant County to present these themes through the lens of local color—so though the settings are mundane and unremarkable, many of the events land in a realm that suspends the familiar through metaphor, sensationalism, magical realism, or the absurd. Some pieces are inspired by real-life events or people and given a twist, like “The Marie Webster House,” others by the what-could-have-been, like “Matter Park.” This project attempts to fully explore the multiplicity of place, and perhaps most importantly, its effect on the people who choose to inhabit these places. By exploring individual degrees of separation or unification, this project aims to crack the formula of how positional closeness correlates with relational unions or

divisions—that in turn define the communities we occupy. In these pages, you'll find that preachers wear gorilla suits, trials surround serial pudding-store robberies, walls crumble around their inhabitants, and through it all, life persists.